

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

12

This chapter summarizes all the Action Plans proposed in this *Management Plan* according to their priority ranking. Suggestions for how citizens can help improve and protect the environment of the estuarine region by being conscientious in their homes and daily lives follow the prioritized list of Action Plans. The checklist of suggestions is titled “What’s Your Pollution Prevention Quotient?”

All Actions presented in this *Plan* are important to successful management of the estuaries, but setting priorities is necessary to guide future NHEP work plans and ensure *Plan* goals are met. The Action Plans are listed here in the order of priority rankings assigned by consensus of the NHEP Management Committee and Project Teams. Participants considered the potential contribution of each action to the success of the *Plan*, and its overall contribution to the management, protection, and enhancement of estuarine resources.

The ranking system includes three levels: Highest Priority, High Priority, and Priority. In the ranking process, NHEP participants were asked to assign a priority of High, Medium, or Low to each Action Plan. Action Plans receiving approximately equal votes of High and Medium, or Medium and Low priority, were assigned a High to Medium, or Medium to Low priority ranking to reflect the group consensus. When votes were mixed but clearly weighted in favor of one designation, final priority was recorded with the majority ranking first – resulting in Medium-High and Low-Medium designations. The result was a continuum of seven possible priority rankings in the DRAFT *Management Plan*: High, High to Medium, Medium to High, Medium, Medium to Low, Low to Medium, and Low. For purposes of proceeding with implementation and developing workplans, the ranking system was simplified for this final *NHEP Management Plan*.

Highest Priority

Critical to achieving *Plan* goals; to be pursued by the NHEP in the first four years of implementation.

High Priority

Less critical to achieving *Plan* goals; to receive less emphasis in the first four years of implementation.

Priority

To be pursued as time and resources allow.

HIGHEST PRIORITY

- WQ-4A Establish ongoing training and support for municipal personnel in monitoring storm drainage systems for illicit connections.
 - WQ-4B Assist Seacoast communities in completing and maintaining maps of sewer and stormwater drainage infrastructure systems.
 - WQ-4C Eliminate illicit connections in Seacoast communities.
 - WQ-5 Conduct shoreline surveys for pollution sources.
 - WQ-7 Provide incentives to fix or eliminate illegal direct discharges such as grey water pipes, failing septic systems, and agricultural runoff.
 - WQ-8 Research the effectiveness of innovative stormwater treatment technologies for existing urban areas in New Hampshire, and communicate the results.
 - WQ-10 Research the use and effectiveness of the *Stormwater Management and Erosion and Sediment Control Handbook for Urban and Developing Areas in New Hampshire*. Revise, publish, and promote the *Handbook*.
 - WQ-13 Provide septic system maintenance information directly to shoreline property owners, and to other citizens of the Great Bay and coastal watersheds to help improve water quality.
 - WQ-16 Find funding sources for key strategies.
 - WQ-19 Stormwater Awareness: Support and expand stormdrain stenciling programs.
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- LND-1 Prepare a report of current and future levels of subwatershed imperviousness for the New Hampshire coastal watershed.
 - LND-2 Implement steps to limit impervious cover and protect streams at the municipal level.
 - LND-5 Revisit/revise municipal decision-maker land-use planning outreach methods and develop an educational effort modeled after the successful University of Connecticut Cooperative Extension “Non-point Education for Municipal Officials” (NEMO) program.
 - LND-6 Minimize urban sprawl in coastal watersheds.
 - LND-6A Develop a regional smart growth pilot partnership to create a smart growth vision among towns and regional planning commissions in a single estuarine watershed.
 - LND-6F Aggressively assist communities that embrace a strong smart growth philosophy to conduct comprehensive reviews, identify sources of funding, provide public education, and implement new land-use tools.
 - LND-9A Reduce the quantity, improve the quality, and regulate the timing of stormwater flow into tidal wetlands through policy changes at the NH DES Wetlands Bureau.
 - LND-9B Reduce stormwater impacts to tidal wetlands through changes to the NHDES Site Specific Program.
 - LND-12 Pursue restoration funding from the DOT, NRCS, US F&WS and other sources.
 - LND-14 Develop and implement an outreach program to encourage and assist communities in developing and adopting land use regulations to protect undisturbed shoreland buffers.
 - LND-15 Support land conservation efforts in shoreland areas.

- LND-16 Improve enforcement of the state Comprehensive Shoreland Protection Act and other applicable shoreland protection policies through outreach efforts to local officials and shoreland property-owners.
- LND-18 Locate and quantify quantity and quality groundwater inflow to the estuaries.
- LND-19 Locate, reduce or eliminate, and also prevent groundwater contaminants.
- LND-25B Provide training and project assistance for towns interested in utilizing the *Method for the Comparative Evaluation of Non-tidal Wetlands in New Hampshire*.
- LND-26 Support implementation of state and federal land protection programs (e.g., Conservation and Reinvestment Act, Land and Community Heritage, Teaming With Wildlife, Land and Water Conservation Fund, Coastal Initiative Program, Farmland Preservation Program).
- LND-27 Support efforts of Great Bay Resource Protection Partnership.
- LND-28 Encourage towns to dedicate current-use change tax penalties to conservation commissions for the purpose of natural resource acquisition, easements, restoration, and conservation land management.
- LND-32 Encourage municipalities to incorporate wildlife habitat protection into local master plans by promoting NH Fish and Game's *Identifying and Protecting Significant Wildlife Habitat: A Guide for Towns* and other activities.
- LND-33 Develop a model local planning approach to encourage the identification and maintenance of contiguous habitat blocks.
- LND-35 Maintain current-use program.
- LND-36 Encourage conservation easements.
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- SHL-1 Implement National Shellfish Sanitation Program guidance to develop an FDA-certified shellfish program.
- SHL-4 Enhance funding to maintain a comprehensive shellfish program.
- SHL-5 Regularly collect and monitor water quality to identify sources and reduce or eliminate contaminants.
- SHL-6 Periodically collect and monitor shellfish tissue samples as appropriate for toxins and biotoxins.
- SHL-7 Maintain an ongoing shellfish resource assessment program.
- SHL-8 Develop and implement a plan for shellfish resource enhancement and habitat restoration.
- SHL-10 Provide information regarding public access to shellfish beds through distribution of maps/booklets.
- SHL-14 Provide for direct citizen involvement in NH shellfish management decisions.
- SHL-15 Evaluate and address barriers to aquaculture and promote environmentally sound aquaculture practices.
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- RST-1 Develop and implement a plan for shellfish resource enhancement and habitat restoration activities to achieve a sustainable resource contributing to a healthy environment.
- RST-3 Continue to restore the restorable tidal wetlands listed in the Natural Resources Conservation Service report, *Evaluation of Restorable Tidal Marshes in New Hampshire*.
- RST-6 Pursue restoration funding from the NH Department of Transportation, US Department of Agriculture/National Resources Conservation Service, US Fish and Wildlife Service, and other sources.
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- EDU-3 Establish a Technical Assistance Grant Program to help implement the *NHEP Management Plan*.
- EDU-5 Support volunteer organizations active in water quality, habitat, or other estuarine natural resource issues.
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HIGH PRIORITY

- WQ-1 Evaluate how Wastewater Treatment Facility effluent affects estuarine water quality, and seek practical options at the state level for secondary and tertiary or alternative treatment where appropriate.
- WQ-2 Evaluate the suitability of UV alternatives to chlorine in wastewater post-treatment for the Seacoast communities.
- WQ-3 Prioritize and then upgrade Seacoast wastewater treatment facilities to reduce bacterial pollution from hydraulic overloading.
- WQ-6 Promote collaboration of state and local officials (conservation commissions, health officers, building inspectors, et al.) to locate and eliminate illegal discharges into surface waters.
- WQ-9 Ensure that water quality and quantity impacts from new development or redevelopment are minimized to the maximum extent practical at the planning board stage of development.
- WQ-12B Enhance oil spill clean up efforts through pre-deployment infrastructure and high speed current barriers.
- WQ-14 Encourage the use of innovative alternative technologies for failing septic systems to help improve water quality.
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- LND-3 Conduct research in coastal NH watersheds to examine the relationship between percent impervious cover and environmental degradation.
- LND-6B Conduct a comprehensive review of the 43 towns within the estuaries and coastal watershed area to determine land-use policies that affect sprawl.
- LND-6C Develop and maintain a comprehensive database or library of new smart growth funding programs.
- LND-6E Actively participate and contribute to the development of new smart growth planning tools with particular emphasis on provisions that protect estuarine water quality.
- LND-7 Complete rulemaking and begin implementation of the *Recommended New Hampshire Wetland Mitigation Policy for NH DES*, prepared by the Audubon Society of NH and the Steering Committee on Wetlands Mitigation.

LND-10	Using the Coastal Method and other techniques, identify and restore additional restorable tidal wetlands.
LND-11	Create a list of potential wetland restoration projects that could be used for wetland mitigation projects, and distribute the list to state agencies and Seacoast municipalities.
LND-13	Provide a framework specific and appropriate to the New Hampshire Seacoast for defining and delineating urban and non-urban shoreland areas.
LND-17	Provide incentives for the relocation of grandfathered shoreland uses.
LND-20	Develop and implement a wetlands buffer outreach program for planning boards.
LND-21	Prevent the introduction of untreated stormwater to freshwater wetlands by enacting legislation giving NH DES authority to regulate stormwater discharge to wetlands.
LND-22	Prevent the introduction of untreated stormwater to wetlands by strengthening municipal site plan review regulations.
LND-24	Work with NH DES to encourage adoption of a state wetlands mitigation policy.
LND-25	Encourage municipal designation of Prime Wetlands and 100-foot buffers (or equivalent protection).
LND-25C	Work with local planning boards and conservation commissions on regulatory approaches to wetlands conservation.
LND-25D	Create and/or enhance local land conservation programs, with emphasis on high value wetlands and buffers.
LND-29	Provide technical assistance in land protection and management to regional land trusts and municipal conservation commissions.
LND-30	Develop and encourage use of biomonitoring standards to evaluate water quality.
LND-31	Use biomonitoring and water quality monitoring to prioritize watershed areas for protection and remediation.
LND-34	Encourage appropriate buffers around important wildlife areas and rare or exemplary natural communities.
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RST-2	Using the Coastal Method and other techniques, identify and restore additional restorable tidal wetlands.
RST- 4	Identify and implement habitat restoration projects in other important non-tidal habitat areas, such as uplands and freshwater wetlands.
RST-5	Create a list of potential wetland restoration projects that could be used for wetland mitigation projects, and distribute the list to state agencies, US Fish & Wildlife Service, and Seacoast municipalities.
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EDU-1	Use existing media to enhance educational efforts.
EDU-4	Maintain and expand the New Hampshire Estuaries Project's shoreline property-owner database.
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PRIORITY

- WQ-11 Revise state industrial discharge permit criteria in response to new processing technology, and re-evaluate existing permits.
- WQ-12A Acknowledge and support the oil spill prevention and response activities of the Piscataqua River Cooperative.
- WQ-15 Support efforts to reduce deposition of atmospheric pollutants through eliminating loopholes in current laws, encouraging the construction of more efficient power plants, and encouraging energy conservation.
- WQ-17 Coordinate public tours of wastewater treatment facilities.
- WQ-18 Support and coordinate stormwater technical workshops.
- WQ-20 Conduct estuarine field day for municipal officials.

- LND-4 Prevent the introduction of untreated stormwater to wetlands by supporting the development of NH Minimum Impact Development Guidelines.
- LND-6D Develop a science-based handbook and video on the nature, causes, and remedies of sprawl for audiences in the coastal New Hampshire watershed area.
- LND-8A Strengthen enforcement and effectiveness of the state tidal buffer zone (TBZ) through outreach to local officials and tidal shoreland property-owners.
- LND-8B Amend state tidal buffer zone (TBZ) regulations to include regulation of deck construction.
- LND-23 Prevent the introduction of untreated stormwater to wetlands through an increased understanding of stormwater impacts on wetland ecology.
- LND-25A Create a traveling Prime Wetlands display.

- SHL-2 Identify sources of and reduce or eliminate contaminants in the New Hampshire estuaries watersheds.
- SHL-3 Institute land use practices in estuarine watersheds that improve water quality and shellfish habitat.
- SHL-9A Decrease shellfish resource depletion and increase productivity with stricter state penalties for illegal harvesting.
- SHL-9B Increase outreach and education about methods to control shellfish predators.
- SHL-9C Explore alternative recreational shellfish harvest methods.
- SHL-9D Increase productivity by discouraging the harvest of immature shellfish.
- SHL-11 Establish *Bounty of the Bay* shellfishing field education program.
- SHL-12 Develop and maintain a shellfisher license information database for use in outreach activities.
- SHL-13 Update materials and improve distribution of shellfish-related information.

- EDU-2 Work with the Seacoast Newspapers to establish a monthly newspaper column on coastal natural resource issues.
- EDU-2A Develop an agreement with Strafford County UNH Cooperative Extension to enable the NHEP Outreach Project Team to contribute coastal natural resource information to the UNH Cooperative Extension column in Foster's Daily Democrat.